

Message Text

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INR-07 IO-10 MC-02 NSC-05 ORM-01 SR-02 PA-01 PRS-01

PM-03 SCA-01 SCS-03 A-01 USIA-06 CPR-01 CU-02 DLOS-03

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DRAFTED BY S/P:MHARMACOST/WLORD

APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY

M-LSEAGLEBURGER

S/S :REWOODS

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 113000

INFORM CONSULS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XC

SUBJECT: THE US RESPONSE TO RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN
SOUTHEAST ASIA AND ELSEWHERE

1. I WANT TO SHARE WITH EACH OF YOU MY THOUGHTS ON WHERE
WE STAND AND HOW WE SHOULD COMPORT OURSELVES IN LIGHT
OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS, PARTICULARLY THE EVENTS IN INDO-
CHINA. THE PRESIDENT FIRST ADDRESSED THESE ISSUES BROADLY
IN HIS STATE OF THE WORLD MESSAGE ON APRIL 10. MY REMARKS
TO THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEWSPAPER EDITORS ON APRIL 15
WERE LIKEWISE DEVOTED TO THESE PROBLEMS. SINCE THEN THE
PRESIDENT AND I HAVE SPOKEN OUT ON OTHER OCCASIONS,
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INCLUDING MY ST. LOUIS SPEECH OF MAY 12. I HOPE YOU AND
YOUR STAFF HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO READ THESE VARIOUS
STATEMENTS.

2. THERE IS NO DENYING THAT WE HAVE EXPERIENCED SERIOUS SETBACKS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS IN RECENT WEEKS. SOME WERE BEYOND OUR CONTROL. SOME WE INFLICTED UPON OURSELVES. AS A CONSEQUENCE, WE MUST BE PREPARED TO FACE TESTS OF OUR OWN RESOLVE AND STAYING POWER IN THE WEEKS AND MONTHS TO COME. MANY HERE ARE INCLINED TO DISCOUNT THE IMPACT OF THE EVENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA ON OUR INTERNATIONAL ROLE. THEY LOOK UPON THE TERMINATION OF THE NORTH-SOUTH CONFLICT WITH APPARENT RELIEF. THEY EMPHASIZE THAT THE RECENT DEFEATS ARE A CONSEQUENCE OF SHORTCOMINGS IN THE CAPABILITIES OF OUR FRIENDS. THEY UNDERScore THE UNIQUE FEATURES

OF THE INDOCHINA CONFLICT, AND HOPE THAT OTHER GOVERNMENTS WILL NOT REGARD OUR ACTIONS THERE AS INDICATIVE OF A GENERAL RETREAT FROM OVERSEAS RESPONSIBILITIES. THEY ARGUE THAT THE CLOSING OF THIS CHAPTER OF OUR SOUTHEAST ASIA POLICY WILL PERMIT A MORE EFFECTIVE DEPLOYMENT OF OUR RESOURCES AND COMMITMENTS IN THE WORLD.

3. WHILE THERE IS SOME VALIDITY TO MANY OF THESE VIEWS, IT WOULD BE IDLE AND DANGEROUS TO LEAVE THE SITUATION AT THAT. WE CANNOT IGNORE THE FACT THAT WE HAVE, INDEED, SUFFERED SOME MAJOR REVERSES AND PROCEED AS IF NOTHING HAD REALLY HAPPENED. AMERICA IS A STRONG NATION THAT CAN -- AND WILL -- SOLVE ITS PROBLEMS ONLY BY FACING UP TO THEM. EVEN THOSE GOVERNMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN MOST CRITICAL OF OUR INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM, WHICH HAVE MOST EARNESTLY REGRETted THE DIVERSION OF OUR RESOURCES AND ATTENTION WHICH OUR INVOLVEMENT PRODUCED, AND WHICH MOST FERVENTLY HOPED FOR AN END TO THE FRACTIOUS DIVISIONS IN AMERICAN OPINION WHICH IT SPAWNED, NOW HARBOR QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO MAKE THOSE DIFFICULT DECISIONS WHICH ARE THE LOT OF A GREAT POWER. WE WOULD BE DELUDING OURSELVES IF WE DISCOUNTED THE EVIDENCE THAT WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN INDOCHINA -- AND IN WASHINGTON -- HAS DISQUIETED MANY OF OUR FRIENDS, ESPECIALLY IN ASIA. WE WILL HAVE TO RESPOND
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TO MANY OF THESE CONCERNS PROMPTLY AND FIRMLY. ALSO WE MUST RECOGNIZE THE FACT THAT THESE EVENTS HAVE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR HOW WE AS A PEOPLE SEE OUR ROLE IN THE WORLD. WE WILL HAVE TO DO SOME MAJOR RETHINKING AND WORK HARD TO SHORE UP THE DOMESTIC FOUNDATIONS OF OUR POLICY. RHETORIC ALONE WILL NOT DO THE JOB. THE IMPACT OF RECENT EVENTS WILL BE MEASURED BY HOW WE AS A NATION MEET OUR CHALLENGES IN THE COMING MONTHS.

4. IN OUR DEALINGS WITH FOREIGN OFFICIALS AND LEADERS OUR CONDUCT MUST BE GUIDED BY SEVERAL GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:

A. WE MUST NOT DWELL EXCESSIVELY ON THE PAST. WE NEED TO LOOK AHEAD. THAT IS THE TONE WE INTEND TO SET HERE. THE PRESIDENT AND I HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT WE INTEND TO AVOID A DIVISIVE NATIONAL DEBATE DESIGNED TO APPORTION BLAME FOR DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA. RECRIMINATIONS ARE A LUXURY WE CAN ILL AFFORD. THERE IS ENOUGH ANGUISH AND BLAME TO GO AROUND. AMERICANS, AT HOME AND ABROAD, MUST CONDUCT THEIR NATIONAL FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE WITH MODERATION, TOLERANCE, AND MUTUAL RESPECT.

B. WITHOUT IGNORING OR DENYING PAST SETBACKS WE MUST RETAIN A SENSE OF PROPORTION ABOUT THEM. THCS IS NO TIME TO BE APOLOGETIC OR DEFENSIVE ABOUT OUR ROLE IN THE WORLD. A DISPLAY OF SELF-DOUBT AND TIMIDITY AT THIS JUNCTURE WOULD FURTHER UNDERMINE THE CONFIDENCE OF OUR FRIENDS AND DIMINISH OUR ADVERSARIES' INCENTIVES FOR RESTRAINT. IF WE DEMONSTRATE A LOSS OF NATIONAL NERVE NOW WE WILL MERELY COMPOUND OUR FUTURE DIFFICULTIES. THUS, WE MUST CONVEY WITH UNMISTAKABLE CLARITY TO POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES THAT OUR CURRENT DIFFICULTIES IMPLY NO SLACKENING OF OUR RESOLVE TO MEET OUR COMMITMENTS OR TO RESPOND TO CHALLENGES. WE WILL NOT BE BELLICOSE, BUT NEITHER WILL WE BE PUSHED AROUND. ABOVE ALL WE MUST CONVEY TO BOTH ADVERSARIES AND ALLIES AN IMPRESSION OF CONFIDENCE IN OUR PURPOSES AND STEADINESS IN THEIR IMPLEMENTATION.

C. WE NEED TO STAND UP FOR OUR VIEWS BOTH IN OUR
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BILATERAL CONTACTS AND IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS. SILENCE OR DEFENSIVENESS IN THE FACE OF ATTACKS ON OUR MOTIVES AND OUR RECORD BEAR LITTLE PLACE UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES; THEY HAVE NO PLACE NOW. WE NEED NOT APOLOGIZE FOR OUR SYSTEM, OUR RECORD OF MAGNANIMITY TO OTHERS, OR THE MAJOR INITIATIVES WHICH WE HAVE TAKEN IN RECENT YEARS TO PROMOTE GREATER STABILITY IN GLOBAL POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS AND TO COPE WITH STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS IN THE WORLD ECONOMY. OUR ROLE IN INDOCHINA PARTICULARLY IS NOT A FITTING SUBJECT FOR PUBLIC SELF-CRITICISM. WE UNDERTOOK OUR OBLIGATIONS THERE WITH HONORABLE INTENT. WE ENDURED MAJOR SACRIFICES ON BEHALF OF A COUNTRY IN WHICH WE SOUGHT NO TERRITORIAL, ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL ADVANTAGE. AND OUR EFFORTS HELPED TO BUY TIME FOR OUR ASIAN FRIENDS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR SECURITY AND PROSPERITY.

D. THE ESSENTIALS OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY DESIGN REMAIN INTACT. OUR RELATIONS WITH JAPAN AND THE WESTERN EUROPEAN DEMOCRACIES ARE EXTRAORDINARILY FREE OF BILATERAL PROBLEMS; THEY ARE MARKED BY GREATER EQUITY AND MORE INTENSIVE CONSULTATION THAN EVERBEFORE. THE

PREMISES OF OUR DETENTE STRATEGY TOWARD MOSCOW AND PEKING REMAIN VALID. WE WILL WORK TO SEE THAT DETENTE CONTINUES TO YIELD A BALANCE OF ADVANTAGES AND THAT POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES DO NOT SEEK TO EXPLOIT WHAT THEY MAY PERCEIVE AS OPPORTUNITIES. WE EXPECT FURTHER PROGRESS THIS YEAR IN LIMITING STRATEGIC ARMS DEPLOYMENTS AND EXPANDING COMMERCIAL AND OTHER BILATERAL EXCHANGES WITH THE SOVIETS, AND IN PROCEEDING ON OUR COURSE OF NORMALIZATION WITH THE CHINESE. DESPITE A

TEMPORARY SETBACK IN OUR MIDDLE EAST DIPLOMACY, THE PARTIES TO THAT CONFLICT STILL RECOGNIZE US AS THE ONLY OUTSIDE POWER CAPABLE OF FACILITATING A SETTLEMENT, AND WE INTEND TO PERSEVERE. OUR EFFORTS TO DESIGN A LONGER TERM RESPONSE TO KEY STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS FACING THE GLOBAL ECONOMY ARE BEARING FRUIT. WE NOW POSSESS FLEXIBLE NEGOTIATING AUTHORITY FOR THE MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS. WE HAVE ACHIEVED A GRATIFYING DEGREE OF SOLIDARITY WITH OTHER CONSUMING COUNTRIES IN THE
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ENERGY FIELD; THE MEASURES WE HAVE THUS FAR TAKEN ARE PRODUCING REAL SHIFTS IN THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND PICTURE FOR OIL. OUR FOOD INITIATIVES HAVE BEEN WELL RECEIVED AND WE EXPECT TO ELABORATE ON THEM FURTHER IN THE MONTHS AHEAD. WE ARE BEGINNING TO DEVELOP A NETWORK OF INTENSIVE AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL TIES WITH SOME OF THE MORE ASSERTIVE AND POWERFUL RESOURCE-RICH COUNTRIES. AND WE ARE PREPARED TO SEARCH WITH COMPASSION FOR SOLUTIONS TO THE ISSUES RAISED BY THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES -- ASSUMING THAT REALISM AND MUTUAL COOPERATION INFUSE THE INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE. IN SHORT, GIVEN THIS RECORD OF SUBSTANTIAL ACCOMPLISHMENT THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR MASOCHISTIC SELF-DOUBT AND SELF-FLAGELLATION. AND GIVEN OUR MILITARY, ECONOMIC, AND TECHNOLOGICAL STRENGTH WE HAVE AN INDISPENSABLE ROLE TO PLAY IN FURTHERING GLOBAL STABILITY AND PROSPERITY.

5. CLEARLY REASSURANCES FROM MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH, HOWEVER INDISPENSABLE IN CONVEYING AN IMPRESSION OF CONFIDENCE AND CONSTANCY, WILL NOT PUT TO REST ALL QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR RELIABILITY. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE PUBLIC CONSENSUS UNDERLYING OUR POLICIES NEEDS EXTENSIVE REBUILDING. THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT FORCES PREACHING RETRENCHMENT. WIDESPREAD SKEPTICISM DOES EXIST ABOUT THE EFFICACY OF MILITARY FORCE TO BUTTRESS OUR DIPLOMACY. THE TENDENCY TO GENERALIZE AND SIMPLIFY FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS ON THE BASIS OF OUR EXPERIENCE IN VIETNAM ALONE IS EVIDENT IN MUCH OF THE MEDIA'S COMMENTARY. THE CONGRESS HAS BECOME MORE ASSERTIVE ON FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES AT PRECISELY THE MOMENT WHEN POWER ON THE HILL HAS BECOME EXCEEDINGLY DIFFUSE. THE

RESULT OF ALL THESE FACTORS CAN BE DRIFT, FRUSTRATION,
AND ACCOMMODATION OF SPECIAL INTERESTS AT THE EXPENSE
OF THE INTEGRITY OF OUR LARGER FOREIGN POLICY DESIGN
AND PURPOSES.

6. WITHOUT IGNORING THESE PROBLEMS, THEY MUST BE PLACED
IN CONTEXT FOR FOREIGN AUDIENCES. RECENT DISAPPOINTMENTS
HAVE NOT DEMORALIZED THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. OUR PEOPLE

RETAIN A FUNDAMENTAL STRENGTH, BUOYANCY, OPTIMISM, AND
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MAGNANIMITY WHICH HAS NOT BEEN SHAKEN BY RECENT EVENTS.
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FOR THE KIND OF COOPERATIVE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS
AND PEACEKEEPING ACTIVITIES WHICH HAVE CHARACTERIZED
US FOREIGN POLICY FOR A GENERATION. I AM CONVINCED THAT
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT A DYNAMIC,
RESPONSIBLE ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS, GROUNDED IN POLICIES
THAT SERVE WELL-DEFINED AMERICAN INTERESTS. PARTLY
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7. AS WE SUCCEED IN PUTTING BEHIND US THE EFFECTS OF INDOCHINA WE CAN DISPLAY THE EFFECTIVE AND UNIFIED

NATIONAL POLICY THAT WE AND THE WORLD SO BADLY NEED. REALISTICALLY, HOWEVER, WE MUST ACCEPT THE FACT THAT WE HAVE DIFFICULT DAYS AHEAD OF US. SINCE OUR NATIONAL PROBLEMS ARE ON SUCH WIDE INTERNATIONAL VIEW, YOU AND YOUR STAFF WILL HAVE SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO PROJECT THE REAL VALUES AND INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES IN THIS DIFFICULT INTERIM PERIOD. I KNOW THAT I CAN COUNT ON YOU TO DO SO IN THE BEST TRADITIONS OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE. WITH YOUR HELP I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL CONTINUE TO BE A MAJOR FORCE FOR BUILDING A MORE PEACEFUL, PROSPEROUS AND HUMANE WORLD. KISSINGER

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